

cannot be written without them. Moreover, the various series I have mentioned contain an overwhelming mass of material never intended for the public eye* With the aid of private correspondence, departmental memoranda and confidential minutes, we are enabled to watch the makers of history at work, to reconstruct the development of situations and ideas. Biographies, autobiographies and diaries cannot be neglected; public declarations and parliamentary debates must be kept in view. But the only solid foundation for our knowledge of international contacts is the material which records from day to day, and sometimes from hour to hour, the impressions, the anxieties, the plans and the decisions of the men at the helm. I have attempted to reconstruct pre-War Europe in the light of the new evidence in my book, *Before the {F*r, and have summarized the sources in *Recent Elevations of European Diplomacy*.*

Let us first cast our eyes farther back. The two governing urges of the British people for the last four centuries have been the development of ordered liberty at home and expansion overseas. Since geography is the mother of history, our pitch * on the north-western fringe of the Continent is the master-key to our diplomacy. To make and to hold an Empire it was essential to secure and maintain supremacy at sea. "What shall we do to be saved in this world ? " asked Halifax the Trimmer. " There is no other answer but this : Look to your moat. The first article of an Englishman's political creed must be that he believeth in the sea." These words were written in 1694. Next to naval supremacy our course has been shaped by the doctrine of the Balance of Power. There are various interpretations of this celebrated formula. To my mind it means the determination, partly

conscious and partly
instinctive, to resist by diplomacy or arms the
growth of any
European State at once so formidable and so
potentially hostile
as to threaten our national liberties, the security
of our shores,
the safety of our commerce or the integrity of
our foreign
possessions. Long before the invention of the
aeroplane we
were too close to the Continent to be indifferent to
its concerns.
We grappled at different times with Spain,
France, Russia and
Imperial Germany. Readers of Mr. Churchill's
epic will
remember Marlborough's conviction that he
was fighting;
not for territory, but to prevent the domination
of Europe by
Louis XIV; and he did not fight in vain.

After the fall of Napoleon we were united in
desiring to keep
our hands free, to trust to our fleet for the
security which other